FACUNDO T. BAUTISTA, PETITIONER, VS. PUYAT VINYL PRODUCTS, INC., RESPONDENT.

G.R. No. 133056. August 28, 2001

Ponente: PARDO, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): https://batas.org/library/g-r-no-133056/

PARDO, J. :

The case is an appeal interposed by petitioner via certiorari from the decision of the Court of Appeals[1] reversing the decision of the Regional Trial Court, Bataan, Balanga, Branch 4, and dismissing the complaint and counterclaim thereto.

The facts, as found by the Court of the Appeals,[2] are as follows:

Facundo T. Bautista owned a farm located at Barangay Mountain View, Mariveles, Bataan, described as Lot No. 326 of the Mariveles Cadastre, containing an area of 165,324 square meters, enclosed with a perimeter fence.

Puyat Vinyl Products, Inc. operated a manufacturing plant on a land adjoining Lot 326, described as Lot No. 336 of the same cadastre.

On April 15, 1994, petitioner Bautista filed with the Regional Trial Court, Bataan, Branch 04, Balanga, a complaint[3] against respondent corporation for damages with the prayer that respondent be ordered to pay the sums of P289,720.00 as actual and compulsory damages; P50,000.00 as attorney's fees and litigation expenses; and costs of the suit.

In its answer with compulsory counterclaim, respondent contended that "the grass fire occurred on January 22, 1994, which originated from the land that adjoins defendant's when some people who were then clearing the area presumably preparatory to their occupying the same, lighted up the grass materials they had gathered but which eventually grew and raged uncontrollably and razed a considerably wide area including a portion of the defendant's property."[4]

After pre-trial and trial on the merits, on September 29, 1995, the trial court rendered a judgment, the dispositive portion of which reads:

> "WHEREFORE, premises considered, judgment is hereby rendered in favor of plaintiff, Atty. Facundo T. Bautista, and against defendant Puyat Vinyl Products, Inc., sentencing the latter to pay, as follows:
>
> "(1) The sum of P352,000.00 as actual and/or compensatory damages, with legal interest thereon computed from the date of the filing of the complaint;
>
> "(2) The sum of P20,000.00 as and for attorney's fees, including litigation expenses; and
>
> "(3) The costs of suit.
>
> "SO ORDERED."[5]

On October 18, 1995, respondent appealed to the Court of Appeals.[6]

After due proceedings, on May 30, 1997, the Court of Appeals promulgated its decision, decreeing as follows:

> "WHEREFORE, the appealed judgment is REVERSED and SET ASIDE. Another judgment is entered dismissing the complaint. Defendant-appellant's counterclaim is likewise dismissed in the absence of evidence that warrants the same.
>
> "No costs.
>
> "SO ORDERED."[7]

Hence, this appeal.[8]

The issues raised are: (1) whether the grass fire started in the premises of petitioner's farm adjacent to respondent's factory compound occurred on January 22, 1994 or January 29, 1994; (2) what was the precise origin of the fire? (3) did the fire start from respondent's factory and crossed over to petitioner's farm?[9]

The issues raised are factual. In an appeal via certiorari, we may not review the findings of fact of the Court of Appeals.[10] When supported by substantial evidence, the findings of fact of the Court of Appeals are conclusive and binding on the parties and are not reviewable by this Court,[11] unless the case falls under any of the exceptions to the rule.[12] Petitioner failed to prove that the case falls within the exceptions.[13]

The trial court and the Court of Appeals determined that the fire started in the respondent's factory compound and crossed into petitioner's property, and actually occurred in the morning of January 29, 1994, not, as respondent claimed, on January 22, 1994. However, the trial court and the Court of Appeals found no scintilla of evidence to prove that the grass fire was a result of the negligence of respondent. The Supreme Court is not a trier of facts.[14] It is not our function to review, examine and evaluate or weigh the probative value of the evidence presented.[15] A question of fact would arise in such event.[16] Questions of fact cannot be raised in an appeal via certiorari before the Supreme Court and are not proper for its consideration. [17]

WHEREFORE, the CourtDENIES the petition, and AFFIRMS the decision of the Court of Appeals in CA-G. R. CV No. 51877, in toto. No costs.

SO ORDERED.
Davide, Jr., C.J., (Chairman), Puno, Kapunan, and Ynares-Santiago, JJ., concur.

---

[1] In CA-G. R. CV No. 51877, promulgated on May 30, 1997, Austria-Martinez, J., ponente, Buena (now Associate Justice, Supreme Court) and Callejo, Sr., JJ., concurring. Petition, Annex "A", Rollo, pp. 40-48.

[2] With editorial changes.

[3] Docketed as Civil Case No. 232-ML. Complaint filed on April 15, 1994, RTC Record, pp. 1-10.

[4] Filed on May 30, 1994, RTC Record, pp. 17-18.

[5] Decision, RTC Record, pp. 416-427.

[6] Notice of Appeal, RTC Record, p. 428. Docketed as CA-G. R. CV No. 51877.

[7] Petition, Annex "A", Rollo, pp. 40-48. On August 02, 1999, we gave due course to the petition, Rollo, pp. 109-110.

[8] Petition, filed on April 24, 1998, Rollo, pp. 9-39.

[9] Petition, Rollo, pp. 9-39, at pp. 21-22.

Bar review courses, mock exams and a study planner that keeps you on pace - batas.org

[10] Cristobal v. Court of Appeals, 353 Phil. 320 [1998]; Sarmiento v. Court of Appeals, 353 Phil. 834 [1998]; Concepcion v. Court of Appeals, 324 SCRA 85 [2000], citing Congregation of the of the Virgin Mary v. Court of Appeals, 353 Phil. 591 [1998]and Sarmiento v. Court of Appeals, supra; Arriola v. Mahilum, G. R. No. 123490, August 9, 2000; Bolanos v. Court of Appeals, 122950, November 20, 2000.

[11] Atillo v. Court of Appeals, 334 Phil. 546 [1997].

[12] Cebu Shipyard and Engineering Works, Inc. v. William Lines, Inc., 306 SCRA 762, 774-775 [1999].

[13] Rivera v. Court of Appeals, 348 Phil. 734, 743 [1998].

[14] Trade Unions of the Philippines v. Laguesma, 236 SCRA 586 [1995].

[15] Trade Unions of the Philippines v. Laguesma, supra, Note 14.

[16] Cheesman v. Intermediate Appellate Court, 193 SCRA 93 [1991]; Ramos v. Pepsi Cola Bottling Co., 125 Phil. 701 [1967]; Pilar Dev. Corp. v. Intermediate Appellate Court, 146 SCRA 215 [1986]; Arroyo v. El Beaterio del Santissimo Rosario de Molo, 132 Phil. 9 [1968];Bernardo v. Court of Appeals, 216 SCRA 224 [1992].

[17] Hi-Precision Steel Center Inc. v. Lim Kim Steel Builders, Inc., 228 SCRA 397 [1993]; Navarro v. Commission on Elections, 228 SCRA 596 [1993].

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at https://batas.org

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.